November 6, 2009

Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Re: GN Docket Nos. 09-47, 09-51, and 09-137; Comments of Connected Tennessee, in response to NBP Public Notice # 7

In response to NBP Public Notice #7, please find attached a document containing a summary of Connected Tennessee's research and activities relevant to FCC proceedings 09-47 (International Comparison and Consumer Survey Requirements in the Broadband Data Improvement Act); 09-51 (A National Broadband Plan for Our Future); and 09-137 (Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability To All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion, and Possible Steps to Accelerate Such Deployment Pursuant to Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, as Amended by the Broadband Data Improvement Act) that seek, in part, to support the contribution of state and local governments to broadband.

Sincerely,

Michael Ramage
Executive Director
Connected Tennessee

Attachment

October 30, 2009

Closing the Digital Divide.
Opening the Possibilities.

E-GOVERNMENT IN TENNESSEE: AN OVERVIEW

Government serves citizens in numerous ways, from offering services like vehicle registration to providing information such as election results. While it is common for people to feel disengaged from the everyday actions of state and local government, technology has allowed governments to begin closing that gap. On the state level, Tennessee has developed www.Tennessee.gov, a comprehensive website that provides government services and information to all citizens. On this site, residents can purchase and update hunting licenses, car dealers can access title searches on cars and citizens can monitor the progress of legislation when the General Assembly is in session. By bringing the services of the state government to the convenience of residents' homes, the Tennessee.gov site provides participants a greater sense of relevance in the actions of state government.

Local governments have also seen the importance of an online presence. They provide communities with many services that offer a great deal of local information and encourage public involvement and awareness. With a web presence, local governments can distribute information to more citizens, provide increased opportunities for interaction with the agencies that affect them and make transactions that previously required a drive to the courthouse accessible online.

TENNESSEE.GOV

NIC, Inc. developed and also maintains and supports the Tennessee.gov website. NIC is the leading provider of outsourced e-Government portals. NIC has built and manages official government websites and e-Government services for 23 states and hundreds of local governments in the United States. NIC supports over 150 online services for the State of Tennessee and works with over 30 departments and agencies to provide a fast, convenient and secure avenue for citizens and businesses to interact with the State of Tennessee. NIC also works to promote and market Tennessee.gov's e-Government services to increase awareness and drive adoption. NIC was awarded a contract through a competitive bid process in 2000 and again in 2005 to develop and promote the Tennessee.gov portal in an effort to drive e-

Government in the state of Tennessee.

The ease of being able to conduct business over the Internet has fostered numerous benefits for the State of Tennessee. According to NIC's Director of eGovernment Services, David Dahle, one important benefit has been cost efficiency and savings. "In just looking at a handful of applications we can easily identify savings in the tens of millions of dollars," explains Dahle. "For example, every driver's license renewal completed online saves approximately $5.75. Over 900,000 renewals have been completed through the portal, saving the State over $5 million."

With user-friendly services and applications, the consumer is also able to reap benefits from e-Government. "Well-designed services guide users to the information they need and lead them through complex processes," says Dahle. "Users are able to conduct business with the State without having to know the specific agency or department that oversees their area of need."

One major benefit? Convenience. "Online services are available 24/7 and they provide immediate access to data and transactional capabilities. No lines, no paper," notes Dahle.

In 2008, Tennessee.gov was ranked in the Top Ten in the nation in this report by The Brookings Institution. The report assesses the nature of American state and federal electronic government in 2008 by examining whether e-government effectively capitalizes on the interactive features available on the World Wide Web to improve service delivery and public outreach.

"Connected Tennessee helps expand the potential user group of eGovernment applications made available through Tennessee.gov," says David Dahle. "The State and its citizens and businesses save time and money as more transactions are completed online through Tennessee.gov."

E-GOVERNMENT & THE ECS PROCESS

To date, 45 counties have launched their Strategic Technology Plans. Of those counties, 32 have established government websites. The remaining 13 counties without websites (Moore, Smith, Van Buren, White, Benton, Carroll, Chester, Dyer, Hardin, Henderson, Humphreys, Lewis and McNairy) have designated Priority Projects to improve government use of technology and the Internet; thus, e-Government among Tennessee counties is clearly a priority.

Over the past few months, Connected Tennessee has been instrumental in helping **Henry County** Government enhance its official website, located at www.henryco.com. Since the establishment of the Henry County eCS Team, the county has begun to realize the importance of e-Government applications

and being able to do business anytime and from anywhere. From the website, citizens can renew car tags and driver's licenses, download notary, marriage and business applications, use the business calculator, pay and search property taxes and access many other services in a matter of minutes. Henry County sees the importance of putting the county at the head of the line technologically by making it easy for the citizens of the county to conduct business.

Through the Sumner County eCS Team, Connected Tennessee has also been able to assist the **City of Gallatin** with designating various areas of downtown as wireless hotspots. Working with "Connect Gallatin," a group organized specifically to enhance the downtown area, a system was installed that provides computer users a broad range access point in the heart of Gallatin, making the entire downtown a wireless hotspot for anyone to log on from anywhere in the area. "Having Internet access is a convenience that anyone in our city can appreciate," says committee member Tom Givens. "It sets our city apart, and it will help promote Gallatin and its abundance of opportunities."

"Hot Zones" are designated by door stickers in the downtown area. Users simply select "ConnectGallatin" as the wireless service they wish to use. While users will be directed to a portal site, there will not be a charge for the use of this service. Since the installation of the downtown hotpots, WiFi service has also been established at the civic center as well as the local park.

"Connected Tennessee is actively working in communities across the state to help citizens feel connected to state and local government," explains Connected Tennessee's Executive Director, Michael Ramage. "Governmental agencies are utilizing technology to streamline day-to-day activities and improve the quality of life for all Tennesseans. From educational to recreational to professional programs, state and local government impacts each and every Tennessean on some level every day, perhaps in ways most of us don't even realize."

NOTABLE GOVERNMENT WEBSITES IN TENNESSEE

A total of 69 counties in Tennessee have government websites. Notable examples include:

- The **Sumner County** Government website (www.sumnertn.org) serves citizens in numerous ways. The website is very informative with useful information for residents and visitors alike. An

offering of copious links direct the visitor to more specific sites. From the county GIS site to the Social Security Administration, one can easily find what they are looking for. With a link to the County Clerk's site, www.sumnertags.com, it is possible to renew car tags and pay online.

- From the **Maury County** Government website (www.maurycounty-tn.gov), citizens can locate their Commissioner and a map of the Commissioner's district. A county calendar is maintained, listing all county meetings and events. Aerial photos with property lines and ownership data are available. Employment information and application forms can be downloaded and the current weather information is kept up to date with a link to an area television station. Each county department has a Web page with varying levels of information and there are links to the municipal websites and quick links to many related governmental and public service websites.

- In **Rutherford County**, each of the incorporated municipalities utilizes technology and their websites extensively. The largest city, Murfreesboro, www.murfreesborotn.gov, has a very interactive site that allows visitors to retrieve GIS-based maps and view live streaming and archived city meetings. Thirty-one officials have contact information listed on the website and most forms, permits and other information is also available. Eagleville's website, www.eaglevilletn.com, has all the basic information about the town, its departments and officials, community events and a listing of all businesses in or near Eagleville. Links for businesses with websites are provided. The city of LaVergne's website, www.lavergne.org, is used extensively by residents and industries seeking relocation sites. The city is one of the fastest growing cities in the country and boasts the largest industrial park and one of the largest subdivisions in the state. Smyrna's website, www.townofsmyrna.org, also has similar information on the city and its departments, as well as downloadable ordinances, permit information and forms. The official Rutherford County Government website has extensive information on all county agencies and departments, boards and commissions. It provides GIS-based maps for tax districts, political boundaries and volunteer fire districts as well as a detailed street map. The street map has the street address for each parcel and detailed property data and the name of the county commissioner. The county website also has an extensive list of links to other useful sites.

- Upon visiting the **Jefferson County** Government website (www.jeffersoncountytn.gov), one can watch a personal welcome message from County Mayor Alan Palmieri. The site also offers access to a calendar of meetings and events, news, the Mayor's office, elected officials, departments, policies and forms, to name only a few resources. Historical information is provided in video format by Jefferson Middle School and includes commentaries by students and some beautiful shots of the county.

- The **Tipton County** Government website offers a listing of County Commission upcoming meetings, meeting minutes and a calendar of special announcements and events. Through the

site, one can access the school system, Chamber of Commerce, economic development and emergency management, election results and other information. Tipton County is one of the few counties in west Tennessee that employees a full time Information Technology position in an effort to expand technology in county government, undertaking efforts like the Tipton County GIS. Tipton County GIS is a provider of map data to the business, consumer and Internet community. Tipton County GIS's goal is to be the county digital map database compiler, providing the foundation for an ever-expanding set of diverse customers who require high quality, cost-effective map data. Tipton County GIS endeavors to provide the public and our clients with the most up-to-date and comprehensive databases available. Or, to put it in simpler terms, Tipton County GIS "makes maps for a living," according to GIS Director Shawn Anderson. Currently, the county uses the system for a multitude of different operations, from mapping utilities to zoning to crime mapping. In addition, the public can also access the system by visiting www.tiptonco.com/gisweb.htm in order to utilize features like interactive mapping showing parcels, property information, aerial photography and much more. "It used to take days for us to answer questions for the public, now it takes hours or even less," explains Shawn. And without broadband technology, such an advanced GIS program in a rural county like Tipton would be impossible. "Internet has completely changed out world," says Shawn. "As a county, if we don't have Internet, we will be left behind."

E-GOV AT WORK ACROSS TENNESSEE

Broadband Technology Helps Bring Government to the People

The team at eGovernment Solutions (eGov) in Knoxville is serious about making government more easily accessible to everyone and they're using the Information Highway to do just that. eGov is a Tennessee-based company with offices in both Nashville and Knoxville that has been providing online services for citizens in Middle and East Tennessee since 2005. The company started out as an online services company and that remains the core of the business, however, eGov began building software within their first year of operation to complement their online services. Today, they work with more than half a dozen companies to provide software and online services to county clerks, county trustees, county court clerks, sheriff's offices and city governments.

"We provide more than twenty online services to clients across Middle and East Tennessee, including online traffic citation payment, online marriage license applications and online car renewals, to name a few," explains eGov's Mark Padgett. "We are committed to providing a faster, more cost-effective service. We are truly striving to bring government to the people."

eGov works with metropolitan areas like Davidson County as well as the more rural areas like Sevier and Monroe. Mark explains that the rural areas are starting to see a spike in eGovernment, a trend he doesn't expect to go away anytime soon. "The way the world is today, people in rural areas are demanding the same online services as people in Nashville," he says. "You can be in a small town in Tennessee and access the same services as someone in a big city."

The growing demand for online services, Mark notes, is something that would not be able to be met without broadband technology. "It truly connects you in ways that nothing else can," he says. "I think broadband empowers people. It allows them to touch the world."

Track Stimulus Funds Online, Thanks to Local and State Government

Want to know how the $4.5 billion in federal stimulus funds coming to Tennessee is being spent? The answer's online. There are several websites now up and running that are full of information and links to provide Tennessee county officials information about the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The state of Tennessee launched www.TNrecovery.com as a resource to check for the latest news related to ARRA implementation in Tennessee as well as access other useful links relating to the ARRA.

Memphis government has also launched www.stimulus.memphistn.gov, a site that allows Memphians to get e-mail updates about the ARRA or to post comments about how local stimulus dollars are being used. The site will also include links to federal and state websites that provide more details about the plan; sources of money, contact information and deadlines that businesses can use to find out how to apply for funds; and benefits that may be available for Memphis and Shelby County citizens.

On the heels of Memphis's website, Hamilton County recently announced the creation of www.hamiltontn.gov/Recovery/Default.aspx, a site dedicated to keeping Chattanoogans informed

about the ARRA grant money being distributed to various Chattanooga entities. Mike Dunne, spokesman for Hamilton County Mayor Claude Ramsey, said the county's page was posted in the spirit of transparency. "The Web page should give the public all the information we have available to share in a timely and widespread manner," he said.

GIS Comes to Dickson County

In Dickson County, the County Commission recently approved a new geographic information system (GIS) that will bring the county and its municipalities into 21st century technology to help them conduct business more efficiently and have critical geographical information ready at all times. Through the GIS, local governments can provide digital information, such as elevations, roads, streams and rivers to entities interested in data relating to geographical locations in the county instead of using paper maps. The system will also make it possible for those entities to retrieve digital information instead of actually physically visiting the sites. Currently 54 of the 95 counties in Tennessee are using GIS.

E-Gov Meets iPhone

In Belle Meade, residents will soon be able to receive neighborhood news on their iPhones. The city is also scheduled to unveil a more interactive and updated website at the end of the month. The effort is part of the new administration's mission to boost community involvement and create a more open and direct line of communication with the residents. Residents who sign up will receive police updates and inclement weather alerts, and will also be able to read the city newsletter online.

Navigate the Tennessee General Assembly with the Click of a Button

If you've ever wanted to track legislation that interests you, find out who represents you and learn how lawmakers are voting, but you had no idea where to begin, the Tennessee General Assembly just got a whole lot easier to navigate, thanks to broadband technology.

With the Assembly's new website, www.capitol.tn.gov, visitors can now:

- Find any bill by topic, not just the bill number. For example, you can find the bill that would lower sales tax on food by typing in "food" or "sales tax" or "tax." (You still can search by bill number, too.)

- Create a list of "my bills." When the legislature is in session, you'll be able to create a personal list of bills you care about. You'll get updates as they move through the legislative committees.

- Watch live feeds of the House and Senate floor sessions for free.

- Find out the name of your state representative and senator simply by typing in your home address. Click on a picture, and it takes you to the lawmaker's new home page. Those include personal bio information and a link to all the bills they are sponsoring.

State officials and NIC, Inc. surveyed about 500 people across the state e to find out what people wanted on the new site.

The outcome of this research? Visitors are now able to track how their elected legislators vote on bills. And when you call up a bill, you'll be able to see video of every committee debate on that proposed law. Changes in committee schedules and agendas, which happen all the time, will now be posted. There are maps of all the House and Senate districts, including detailed street maps. The new site also includes the names and e-mail addresses of key staff members in every elected official's office.

The new website is fast, easy to use, and more importantly, allows real people to track the things elected officials are doing with our money and our lives.

Governor Bredesen Announces New Web Resource to Help Tennessee Families in Struggling Economy

Governor Phil Bredesen recently announced that the state of Tennessee has launched a new "Help for Tennessee Families" website designed to help citizens in these difficult economic times with information about finding a job, job training, access to healthcare services and tips for reducing energy and transportation costs.

"As a state, we offer or administer a wide variety of programs and services that can help Tennesseans weather these tough economic times," Bredesen said. "We hope this tool will make it

easier for Tennessee families to find information or link to the resources that can make a difference in their ability to find a job, get health insurance or health care services, reduce their energy consumption or pay for college."

Tennesseans can access the new website at www.TN.gov by clicking on "Help for Tennessee Families" or at www.TN.gov/helpforfamilies.

The website's Job Center has information for Tennesseans looking for work or job training, with specific information for veterans in need of job placement, job seekers 55 years of age or older, and workers whose company has moved or shifted production to another country. The site's Business Center provides information on financing for small business and how to find a mentor to help jump start or retool a business.

The Energy and Transportation section offers information for those who need assistance with heating and cooling expenses, tips on ways to increase energy efficiency and save on power bills, or looking for ways to reduce transportation costs.

Sections on Health Insurance, Healthcare and Healthier Living highlight the Cover Tennessee and TENNderCARE programs, offer assistance to those who need help getting vaccines for children, dental care, or screenings for breast and cervical cancer, or looking for information about the Food Stamp or Free and Reduced Price school lunch program.

Other sections of the new site include Food and Nutrition, Paying for College and Affordable Activities, with information on low-cost getaways and how to sign up to receive free books for children under five through the Imagination Library.

East Tennessee Political Blogger Gains National Recognition – at the Age of Seventeen

An online radio show that captured nearly 2,000 listeners. A political blog that has caught the eye of Senators across the country. A petition to run for County Commissioner in 2010. While this sounds like the resume of a seasoned politician, the man behind all these accomplishments is Clinton's own 17-year-old Daniel Myers.

While he is not even old enough to vote yet, Daniel has made quite a name for himself in local politics in Anderson County. He got his start in political blogging in 2006, after watching his dad, Oak Ridge Police Officer Randy Myers, campaign for the GOP nomination for sheriff in 2002 and 2006.

Unfortunately, his dad was defeated both times, but the political torch was officially passed. "I've always loved writing, so I just put politics and writing together," Daniel says.

Daniel started posting his comments about national events online in October 2006 at www.myerspolitics.blogspot.com. A few months later, he decided to fine tune his coverage to primarily the Anderson County and Clinton political scenes. He regularly communicates with local officials and sits in on County Commission meetings to gather material for his blog. And while he's become something of a local celebrity and is even the subject of a petition, urging him to run for County Commissioner in 2010, he's got his sights set on a less high-profile course of action…at least for the time being.

"I graduate in May 2009, and I am planning to go to college," he explains. "I'm just not sure where or what I'll be majoring in yet."

For now, Daniel is home schooled through the Christian Fellowship Academy in Knoxville, and for the most part, is a pretty typical kid.

"The Internet is really a phenomenal way of keeping people in touch with what's going on," he says. "I used to have a dial-up connection, and there is no way whatsoever I could have accomplished what I have without broadband."

CONCLUSION

In today's increasingly digital world, the people of Tennessee have benefited from better access to government services, policies and officials. More homes and businesses connected to broadband and online government services such as those offered through Tennessee.gov have increasingly become more popular and more widely used. From July 2007 to January 2009, the growth in e-Government services coincides highly with Tennessee's significant increase in broadband adoption. The share of adults who use the Internet to access information about government policies or services has almost doubled from 22% to 47%. A majority of residents with broadband at home access e-Government services, regardless of income bracket. Broadband also narrows disparities in online access to e-Government services. For example, residents in the lowest income groups are more than twice as likely to use the Internet for government information and services when they have broadband at home.

For additional research information on government and other sectors, visit www.connectedtn.org.